Member in the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) were granted the Higher Administrative Grade (+) scale (Rs.75,500-80,000/-). Subsequently, after taking into account various aspects, the Govt. of India has decided to further upgrade the above posts to the apex scale of Rs. 80,000/- (fixed) with the status of Special Secretary to the Govt. of India.

(b) the grade of Higher Administrative Grade (+) is applicable to some posts in the Indian Police Service, but not to Indian Administrative Service;

(c) no action has been taken on the issue;

(d) the recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission regarding Central Staffing Scheme are not listed in the pending items notified for further deliberations by the Government.

Special economic package for Bihar

†1858. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Bihar has demanded a special economic package;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government proposes not to give Bihar the status of a special State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Finance has not received any demand for a Special Economic Package for the Government of Bihar in the current year. However, Chief Minister of Bihar has written a letter to the Prime Minister seeking assistance and support on various issues including Kosi Reconstruction and Rehabilitation and grant of Special Category Status to Bihar. A proposal has been received from the Government of Bihar regarding grant of Special Category Status to the State and Government of India is seized of the matter.

Broadening the net for excise duty

1859. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in order to raise tax revenue for economic recovery, it has become necessary to broaden the net for excise duty;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how will it be ensured that the poor and lower middle class people are not adversely affected?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir. Government has sought to deal with the economic slowdown by providing fiscal stimulus through a reduction in excise duty rates rather than raising the tax revenues by broadening the net for excise duty.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Usage of third party ATMs

1860. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is strictly implementing the usage of third party Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) without charging any fee in all parts of the country by using ATMs on e-commerce transactions and e-Government activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) On the directions issued by Reserve Bank of India, Banks are allowing its customers to access Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) of other banks without levying any charges for balance enquiry and cash withdrawals.

Borrowings by Andhra Pradesh

1861. SHRI NANDAMURI HARIKRISHNA:
SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Central Government to amend the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM) and allow it to borrow money from the market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Central Government has allowed the State Government of Andhra Pradesh to borrow Rs. 7632 crores from the market; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has requested that the State Government be permitted to raise an additional sum, not exceeding Rs. 5966 crore from the market in the current fiscal year, over and above Rs. 7632.60 crore permitted by Government of India for 2008-09, to meet the shortfall in the revenues due to slowdown in the economy, without losing the benefits of Debt waiver and interest relief. In view of the economic slowdown, the Finance Minister has recently announced that the states will be permitted to increase their fiscal deficit to 4% of the GSDP for the year 2009-10. This will allow the state to borrow upto Rs. 14852 crores in the current year.